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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330  
Letter No. 2467 June 29, 1990



SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE CLAYTON YEUTTER and Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan announced a five-point package of measures to achieve a balance between preserving the Northern Spotted Owl and protecting jobs in the Pacific Northwest June 26. Cy Jamison, director of the Bureau of Land Management at Interior, stands behind Lujan. "This administration is concerned about endangered species and the livelihood of families in the Pacific Northwest," Yeutter said. (USDA Photo.)

WHEAT STARCH -- BIODEGRADABLE WRAPPER FOR BREAD? Tomorrow's sandwich bread might come wrapped in a bag that's made from wheat, if USDA research pays off. Ideally, wheat starch could make biodegradable films that are thinner, stronger and chewed up faster by microorganisms than current biodegradables made with corn starch. "We're a long way from biodegradable plastic made with wheat starch," says USDA Chemist Jerold A. Bietz. "The first need is a practical way to sort out the really small granules that would go into such plastics." Contact: Jerold A. Bietz (309) 685-4011.

USDA STEPS UP SURVEILLANCE -- USDA is cooperating with state veterinary diagnostic labs & Iowa State University to do a national surveillance program to make sure the U.S. is free of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, the so-called "mad cow" disease, that has been found in Great Britain. Contact: Margaret Webb (301) 436-7799.

GET TO KNOW ALF -- USDA's National Agricultural Library would like you to get to know ALF. No, no. Not the wise-cracking, furry alien of TV fame. ALF is the library's computer bulletin board, which provides access to, and a means to exchange, ag information & resources. And, incidentally, ALF stands for "Agricultural Library Forum."  
Contact: Brian Norris (301) 344-3778.

NEW SWINE TOOL -- A new biotechnology tool can diagnose swine dysentery two to five times faster than current tests, USDA scientists say. Microbiologists Neil S. Jensen & Thad B. Stanton developed the DNA probe. With the probe & a fecal sample from a pig, lab technicians can identify the bacterium that causes swine dysentery within a day or two. The DNA probe does the job by bonding to a unique gene sequence, like a signature, say the scientists. Contact: Neil S. Jensen (515) 239-8288.

FARMLAND VALUES HIGHER -- U.S. farmland values in 1990 are expected to rise 3 to 4 percent, which is close to last year's 4 percent increase, USDA economists say. The 1990 forecast incorporates net farm income close to the 1989 record, slightly lower inflation-adjusted interest rates, slightly lower inflation and recent changes in farmland values. The U.S. average farmland value rose in 1989 for the third consecutive year, reaching \$693 per acre as of Jan. 1, 1990. Contact: Roger Hexem (202) 786-1422.

CATFISH PROCESSING UP -- Farm-raised catfish processed during May totaled 31.5 million pounds, up 9 percent from a year ago, USDA economists say. The May average paid to growers was 79 cents per pound, 3 cents above the same month last year. Contact: Ron Sitzman (202) 447-3244.

ROACH ALLERGY -- Because allergy to cockroaches poses a significant threat to human health, a team of USDA scientists is collaborating to help. An estimated 10 to 15 million people in the U.S. are allergic to roaches. Where prevention isn't possible, the team hopes to improve treatment for sensitive people, who even react to body parts from roaches, long dead, that linger in their homes. "People simply cannot continue to view cockroaches as just a nasty nuisance," says USDA Entomologist Richard J. Brenner. Contact: Richard J. Brenner (904) 374-5937.

WIND EROSION DOWN -- Wind erosion has damaged an estimated 7.8 million acres in the Great Plains during the Nov.-thru-May wind erosion season, says Wilson Scaling, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service. This is down from last year, when nearly 14 million acres were damaged. Contact: Diana Morse (202) 447-4772.

YOU WON'T BE GETTING your Farm Broadcasters Letter for next two weeks. We'll be on summer vacation. Next issue will be July 20.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1725 -- Gary Crawford looks at the problem of groundwater pollution from agricultural chemicals and waste products and the technologies and techniques farmers and homeowners can use to reduce the problem. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1207 -- Spotted owl; food safety update; protecting poultry from salmonella; nutrition labeling; selling your timeshare. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE #1714 -- USDA news highlights; integrated crop management; maximizing catfish production; pond doctor; chilling injury. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1326 -- The fungus within; resistant tall fescue; germplasm network; innovative plant storage; freezing for the future. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Fri., July 6, dairy products; Tues., July 10, crop/weather update, China outlook; Wed., July 11, horticultural exports; Thurs., July 12, U.S. crop production, USSR grain outlook, world ag. supply/demand; Fri., July 13, livestock/poultry outlook, milk production, world cotton situation, world oilseed situation, world grain/crop situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.  
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE  
(June 28, 30 and July 2, 1990)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on the national forest campsite reservation; Lynn Wyvill takes a look at summer food safety; Will Pemble describes twining in cattle research; Lisa Telder reports on farmer respiratory problems.

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter and Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan on spotted owl management plans; Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Jack Parnell on food safety; Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. Louis Sullivan on food labeling; USDA chief meteorologist Dr. Norton Strommen on weather update; USDA economist Steve Milmo on soviet imports.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY . . . . . 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D  
SATURDAY . . . . . 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D  
MONDAY . . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D  
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)



OFFMIKE

ROUND THE CLOCK...planting put corn in the ground, says Jeff Nalley (WOMI/WBKR, Owensboro, Ky.), but the delay caused by excessive moisture has resulted in reduced acreage. The plan last Spring when warm weather arrived early was to get it all in the ground ahead of schedule, but Jeff says a 60-day monsoon visited the area making everything late. Tobacco is set but behind schedule, and wheat has been hurt by wetness.

SATELLITE DISHES...were rearranged by severe weather hitting Topeka, Kans. Kathy Patton (WIBW, Topeka) also says the wheat harvest in Kansas will likely be variable. Diseases and moisture vary by region, and some observers say most producers will not obtain 39 bushel yields. Kathy says they won't know until the grain is in the bins. Update on her 16-year old son injured in field accident: Ryan is home from the hospital, continues therapy, has driven his pickup, and looks forward to a return of feeling to his legs.

### ***Farm Broadcasters Letter***



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COUNTY FAIRS...and state fair are on the schedule of Rita Frazer (WSMI, Litchfield, Ill.). Rita will make daily broadcasts throughout the fair season. Rita says wetness has forced several producers in her area to replant to milo, and that a tight seed market has reduced opportunities to plant other crops.

WHEAT HARVEST...is completed in the region served by Barry Mahler (KWFT, Wichita Falls, Texas). Late rain and leaf rust took a toll, reducing an expected good crop to only average yields. Cotton is up and looking good. Barry says last December's freeze is apparent in improved pastures, up to 75 percent loss in some fields. Native grasses are doing fine.

FARM BROADCASTERS LETTER...will be on vacation the first two weeks of July. Lets all celebrate our freedoms on Independence Day.

  
VIC POWELL  
Chief, Radio & TV Division